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TEACHING ENGLISH

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EDITORIAL

AMONG the excellent services to the cause of Education in India performed by the All-India Council for Secondary Education has been the preparation of draft syllabuses for the different subjects taught at the High School level. These have been prepared in an endeavour to help the different states to implement the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission with regard to the re-organisation of the general pattern of education in this country. It is obviously desirable that, in the interests of some uniformity of standards in the various school subjects throughout the country, basically similar syllabuses should be adopted in the various states.

The Council has stated in the first sentence of the proposed syllabus in English that "English is to be treated as a skill subject and not as a content subject." The principles to be followed arising from this proposition are stated in the following fashion:

(1) That an oral foundation should be established before reading is started.

(2) That there must be vocabulary control.

(3) That an approach through structures should be used rather than through vocabulary items only.

(4) That there should be selection and gradation of structures on the basis of their productivity, simplicity and teachability.

(5) That stress should be laid on teaching only one item at a time and moving on to the next item only when its predecessor has become thoroughly established.

(6) That the use of the learner's mother tongue should be reduced to a minimum, resort to it being made only for the comparison of its structures with those of English or for clarifying the meaning of a word.

The draft syllabus further advocates that English should be studied at High Schools for 6 years, and that a vocabulary of 2,000 words should be aimed at. The syllabuses in use in Madras and Andhra are recommended for study.

Suggestions are made regarding the amount of work to be covered in each year of study. The compilers very wisely have not gone into detail, since it is on matters of detail that there is disagreement among the experts. Nevertheless, the general indications given are very sound, and sufficiently specific for it to be easily possible to carry out the further process of itemising the material to be learned in the various sections.

Those responsible for the draft syllabuses are to be warmly congratulated on the excellence of their proposals, which are in complete accord with modern beliefs regarding the teaching of languages. It is greatly to be hoped that the various States will consider these proposals carefully and devise means for implementing them in the near future. If this is done, then the present process of deterioration may be arrested and uniform standards for the whole country be achieved.

HANDWRITING IN SCHOOLS

III

BY K. V. THIRUVENKATACHARY

ONE often comes across pupils in every class and in every school who cannot evaluate their daily work, not to mention their performance in examinations. If we ask them, "How did you do in the examination? How many marks do you hope to get?" we sometimes get fantastic replies; one will say, "I did very well and I hope to get about 70 per cent," and will actually get about 20 per cent. Another will say, "I did not do well, and so I hope to get about 35 per cent" and will actually score about 60 per cent. What is the cause of these varied answers? The reason is a simple one, namely, lack of proper training in the art of self-evaluation.

We felt the need to introduce the system of self-evaluation even in the early stages so that the pupils themselves could judge of their own performances as well as those of others by some objective means. It was thought that self-evaluation of daily transcription work was the easiest way to begin. So it was introduced in the Third Form stage from the beginning of the year. The quantity of writing was restricted to about 20 lines from familiar passages per day, that is about a page of a quarto notebook. For some days the pupils were at a loss in applying the method of self-evaluation. Each pupil was doing it in his own way. There was a big gap between his estimate and that of the teacher, and this led to the creation of a device by which the scoring and judging could be standardised, the subjective element being eliminated as far as possible.

In a piece of transcription work accuracy as well as legibility and neatness need to be measured objectively. After bestowing much thought on this problem, the following advice was offered:—

SELF-EVALUATION OF DAILY TRANSCRIPTION WORK

GUIDANCE TO PUPILS

No. of Lines : 20

I. MEASUREMENT OF ACCURACY.
MAX. OF 5 MARKS

FOR	DEDUCT
1. omission of a word	1
2. substitution of a word	1
3. a spelling mistake	½
4. omission of a punctuation mark or a capital letter	½
5. omission of a tick or a dot	¼

II. MEASUREMENT OF LEGIBILITY AND NEATNESS.
REMEMBER FACTORS AFFECTING LEGIBILITY

1. Opening of paragraphs.
2. Alignment of letters in a word and of words in a line.
3. Spacing beween letters, words and sentences.
4. Shape and sizes of letters.
5. Joining of letters with links.

AND

COMPARE WITH THE CORRESPONDING ONE ON THE HANDWRITING SCALE AND JUDGE BY APPEARANCE FOR A MAXIMUM OF 10 MARKS.

THEN

DEDUCT FOR	MARKS.
1. Every crossing out of a word or a phrase ..	½
2. Wrong use of margins	1
3. Lack of neatness (spilling ink, etc.) up to a max. of 2.	

For measuring legibility the use of a Handwriting Scale is highly commendable although it is ,not widely known in our country. The advantages of such a scale are:—

1. It enables a pupil to measure daily his own quality of writing.

2. It enables a school to compare the average standard of the same class in different years, and

3. It can also be used to compare the average standard of the same class in different schools.

One cannot be expected to root out subjectivity totally by using such a scale; nevertheless objective evaluation can better be effected through this than through any other means. Whoever

evaluates with this scale, be he a boy or a teacher or a stranger, there will not be much difference in assessing the quality of a specimen of handwriting.

In the experiment we conducted, at the beginning of the year specimens of handwriting were collected under normal conditions and their legibility was evaluated for a maximum of ten marks by different people; some were lecturers in the Training College attached to our institution, some were senior English teachers and one was an artist; the writer himself took part. The specimens were arranged and rearranged several times and finally shaped into a Handwriting Scale in descending order of the scores obtained. Evaluation of a specimen of handwriting using such a scale may seem somewhat difficult at first but with a little practice in matching it with the one on the scale to which it is most similar, every one can easily learn this art. After the boys had acquired this skill, they began to use the Handwriting Scale with great joy; for they found that they could almost predict what they would get whoever evaluated their work. So this method helped them to assess their work and know in advance what it was worth. After self-evaluation of the day's transcription work was over, pupil-evaluation was done immediately by exchange of papers; teacher-evaluation followed. The results were recorded as follows:—

SELF-EVALUATION

Legibility & Neatness Max. 10			Accuracy. Max. 5.			Total Max. 15			No. of Mistakes Found.		
S.E.	P.E.	T.E.	S.E.	P.E.	T.E.	S.E.	P.E.	T.E.	S.E.	P.E.	T.E.
8	7	8	4	5	4½	12	12	12½	2	Nil	1

Teacher Pupil Corrected

In actual practice this form was found to be the least cumbersome, and proved easy for pupils to fill in. Self-evaluation was first done with ordinary ink, evaluation by another pupil by interchange was next done with a red pencil, scoring off or approving of the first, finally ending with the teacher-evaluation with a blue pencil. It is gratifying to point out that, after about a month's practice in this system, it was found to consume only about half

an hour which was only one-fourth of the time it had taken previously, thus saving about an hour and a half for the teacher which he could very well use for some other useful purpose. After such evaluation, it was the practice to hand over the note-books to the respective owners offering individual guidance where they had gone wrong. Thus the pupils were systematically trained to measure their progress themselves.

Evaluation, to be real and very effective, should be a continuous process and so spread throughout the year So this method of evaluation was carried on throughout the year and it formed part of the English promotion test, carrying ten per cent of the maximum marks. In addition, it was found to serve as one of the several valuable means of strengthening the visual memory of individual words; for every individual pupil, besides correcting his own exercise after copying from the text-book, corrected that of another, not in a slipshod manner but with a view to assessing the accuracy of the work Thus every pupil had the chance of looking at the component parts of difficult words three or four times every day, and if the same exercise were to be repeated for about three consecutive days, one could be fairly sure of having the correct visual images reinforced.

The pupils were expected to maintain even during the weekly speed test the same quality of legibility and neatness coupled with accuracy that they normally aimed at in their everyday work. Speed of copying was calculated at so many letters per minute. For this purpose, every punctuation mark, including the apostrophe, was counted as equivalent to one letter, as it required, in the opinion of the writer, almost the same time to write as a letter would.

During the third year of English, that is in the Third Form, the various speeds of the pupils besides the average of the class, were recorded for 39 weeks commencing from July '55 and ending with March '56. It is significant that the median and the mean were almost the same every week in a class of 27 boys who were subjected to this method of writing. A graph was drawn representing the progress of the boy at the top as well as that of the one at the bottom indicating thereon the average level of the whole class too. A careful study of this graph has revealed the following facts about the causes influencing the speed of copying from the book :—

1. The quickest pupil is always more able to grasp the techniques of developing a higher speed and is always restless to move on faster and faster;

2. Only the kind of timepiece called the "Time Interval"

must be used for the speed test as the time recorded by it is the most reliable; with ordinary types of watches one cannot mark the limits of a period of time precisely.

3. Occasionally the quickest in time performs badly because of some physiological or physical cause. On such occasions his performance should be overlooked.

4. Passages selected for the speed test should be graded, that is one should start with easy ones at the beginning of the year and gradually go on to more difficult ones well within the range of structures and vocabulary meant for the class.

5. Pupils who are otherwise intelligent and should score very high marks can also be found to be at the bottom of the class with regard to speed. The graph and other charts together will serve as a valuable instrument for detecting such pupils and offering the right individual guidance to them.

6. If the speed test is conducted on passages transcribed on days immediately preceding, an abnormal rise in the speed of every individual will be observed.

7. Speed tests should be conducted weekly. If there is a break in the conduct of these classes, one notices a fall in the speed of every individual, which affects the average level of the class.

8. The longer the vacations and other holidays, the greater is their adverse influence on the speed of every individual. On such occasions one notices a very sharp, sudden fall in speed as well as in accuracy. To avoid this adverse influence, interest should be created and pupils should be encouraged to carry on the transcription work systematically even during holidays.

The range of speed obtained in the year was as follows :—

	At the beginning of the year.	At the end of the year.
1. Maximum	51	71
2. Minimum	27	36
3. Average	38	46

It should be noted that, while the American standard of speed at the end of the third year of study is 44 letters per minute, it was possible for our pupils to achieve a speed of 46 letters. But we should bear in mind the following factors :—

1. English is the mother tongue of the Americans whereas it is not so for us; this fact imposes an additional burden.

2. The pupils in America would be about the age of 9 as contrasted with ours who are about the age of 13 during the third year of study.

3. Our pupils have had more training in the use of the finger muscles which are usually brought into play while learning to write our mother tongue during all the years up to the third year of study of English, as contrasted with, perhaps, little training beforehand in any other language in the case of American pupils.

If such techniques are adopted in the lower forms of a high school, one should not experience much difficulty in the follow-up work in the two higher forms, leaving the S.S.L.C. Class to itself to prepare for the public examination. Many times we have noticed boys in the S.S.L.C. Class remarking, "What a pity, I knew the answer very well but I couldn't even attempt that question for want of time! If I had done it, I should have got about 15 marks more." Is there no way out for such pupils? To the writer's mind the only answer is early detection and systematic adoption of the techniques explained above.

SPOKEN ENGLISH AND WRITTEN ENGLISH

BY D. H. SPENCER

Education Officer, British Council, Bombay

WE must begin, as the philosophers say, by defining our terms. By Spoken English (S.E.) I mean colloquial English, the English we use in conversation, not in making a speech, or giving a lecture, or reading aloud. By Written English (W.E.) I mean the so-called "literary" language. In these senses it is obvious that Spoken English may be written and Written English may be spoken. If a speech or lecture is given extempore or on the spur of the moment, then the English used is S. E. If a person speaks in an unusually careful or pedantic manner, then the English used is W. E. But most people speak rather differently to the way in which they write, and it is this distinction which interests us here.

S. E. depends on four things: our social class, our education, the district we were born and brought up in, and our audience. It varies both horizontally, from one part of the country to another and vertically, from one social class to another. I am referring for the moment, of course, only to English in its native country. There are class differences as well as regional differences (dialects), although both these are tending to disappear—and quite rapidly—under the impact of widespread literacy and the B.B.C. A person brought up to speak a dialect may lose that dialect at school or in later life,

where he finds it a disadvantage. But usually he will retain the ability to speak it and will revert to it at home, among other speakers of the same dialect. The type of audience also affects S. E., because if one is speaking to a person not so well educated as oneself one will naturally speak more simply; and if one is speaking to a foreigner whose command of the language is poor, one will try to speak more slowly as well as more simply. The type of audience, it may be worth mentioning, includes the sex of the audience: men are apt to be more restrained in the company of women!

W. E. is not subject to these differences. It is standard for the whole country, is understood by everybody, and written by everybody with a secondary education. Pronunciation does not affect it, nor do dialects, because dialect words are usually avoided in writing. Both native and foreign speakers can always understand a passage of W. E. when they read it; whereas they might not understand the same passage when it is read aloud by a foreigner or by a native speaker with a marked regional accent.

With speakers of Standard (Southern) English the differences between S. E. and W. E. are not so great, because the influence of both dialect and social class is largely eliminated. But they are still considerable, and I have tried to analyse them under the headings of vocabulary and syntax.

Vocabulary :

1. In S. E. far fewer words are used, and there is a strong preference for the short word of Anglo-Saxon origin over the multi-syllabic word of Latin origin. In other words, if you will forgive the exaggeration, we say "a lie", but we are tempted to write "a terminological inexactitude". This tendency accounts also for the constant shortening of words which is such a noticeable feature of English speech—bus for omnibus, phone for telephone, photo for photograph, plane for aeroplane, fridge for refrigerator, telly for television. Some of these short forms are now accepted in W. E., while others are not. The process takes time. Of these examples the last two would not normally appear in print.

2. The limited vocabulary of S. E. is to some extent increased by slang, which does not occur in W. E. Words like "fags", "copper", "fed up", "nuts", all frequently on the lips of English people, do not come so naturally to their pens.

3. Swear words and expletives which tend to dot the average conversation are always avoided in W. E. The need for them does not arise. Some people will aver that swear words at least

should be avoided altogether, both in speaking and in writing, but when someone treads on your toe and it hurts, or you miss the last bus by a matter of seconds, it is difficult not to give vent to a quite natural and spontaneous surge of anger. What often governs the use of swear words is the company in which you find yourself. They are far more frequent in conversations between men; in mixed company they are usually avoided out of a feeling of respect for the so-called weaker sex.

4. A feature of S. E. is the cliché. Most people use clichés more or less involuntarily when they speak—trite and hackneyed phrases which have been spoilt by over-use. Examples are: the inner man, too funny for words, to be or not to be, God forbid. Of course clichés occur in W. E. too, but a writer who knows his job will do his best to avoid them. When you write you do not have the excuse that there is no time to think of a less familiar, more elaborate, phrase.

5. Foreign words appear much more frequently in W. E. than in S. E. Latin phrases or "tags", of which a surprising number are recorded in the dictionaries, (a relic of the old emphasis on classical education), continue to appear regularly in print. They are not heard in conversation except occasionally from highly educated speakers. Examples of such tags are: *ipso facto, ad hoc, ex officio, pro bono publico, ad infinitum.* The many French words in English may be conveniently divided into two kinds: those which are necessary, because there is no suitable English word e.g. rouge, garage, ballet; and those which are unnecessary and are generally a sign of intellectual arrogance e.g. *demi-monde, au pied de la lettre, café noir, enceinte.* The words in the first group have had their pronunciation anglicized and appear equally in W. E. and S. E. Those in the second group are hardly ever found in S. E. A small number of words from other languages occasionally crop up in W. E., but again it is usually because the writer is proud of his knowledge, not because they are indispensable. Examples are: German—*Weltanschauung, Schadenfreude,* Italian—*condottieri,* Spanish—*hidalgo.* Except for common proverbs and temporary catchwords the same remarks might apply to quotations.

6. There is a small group of archaic words which are confined to W. E. and are quite superfluous even there. I have in mind such words as: quondam, quoth, whilom, eftsoons, anent, howbeit, peradventure. Two possible exceptions are albeit and betwixt.

7. Another group of words which is nearly always confined to W. E. is that consisting of legal and commercial expressions:

herewith, hereinafter, aforementioned, aforesaid, the Latin abbreviations: ult., inst., and prox., with dates etc.; I cannot speak for the law, but it seems to me that business firms would do well to avoid such stale and awkward terms in their letters. The Civil Service, too, for that matter. Technical words and jargon are never, of course, counted as colloquial English, but they come into the general category of S. E. when men (and women) are "talking shop".

Syntax:

S. E. is usually both unpremeditated and in a hurry. In conversation, at any rate, we rarely stop to think about what we are going to say—we just say it, and if, as we speak, we realize that the structure of our sentence is not what it should be, we correct ourselves as we go along. Moreover, if we speak too slowly, or hesitate too long, searching for the right word, our listeners become impatient and no longer give us their full attention. S. E., therefore, pays much less attention to the grammatical niceties of the language and relies, as W. E. can never do, on facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice. Sentences are often unfinished—a shrug of the shoulders or raising the eyebrows does the job for us. Intonation also plays a large part in conveying meaning. Would-be actors, I believe, are required to say some quite banal sentence, such as "A horse has four legs," in several different tones of voice, each tone registering one of the common emotions—fear, surprise, anger, sadness etc;

1. In S. E. it is obligatory to use the contractions of pronoun and verb and of verb and "not", e.g. I'm, it's, he'll, don't, mustn't, can't, etc ; They are only not used when there is need of special emphasis e.g. "You say I told a lie? I certainly did not." Any other possible abbreviation is also used, e.g. "The men'll be here soon," and all the weak forms are brought into play.

2. Non-defining relative clauses are rare in S. E., comparatively frequent in W. E. Instead of saying something like: "My Uncle Joe, whom you met last year, is dead." We are more likely to say: "Do you remember you met my Uncle Joe last year? Well, he's dead."

3. Inversions of verb and subject are much rarer in S. E. than in W. E. To say something like: "Never have I seen such a wonderful sunset" sounds a little stilted even when emphasis is intended. Perhaps the English leaning towards reserve and understatement has something to do with this.

4. Rhetoric and all forms of pompous language are confined

to W. E. You may occasionally hear a rhetorical question in S. E., but any continuous passage of high-flown, long-winded English is only heard in prepared speeches (especially of politicians!) and therefore comes under our definition of W. E.

5. A frequent feature of S. E. is a sudden breaking off, either leaving the rest of the sentence unfinished or continuing it in quite a different way, e.g: "When you were talking to me last night, you said—no, wait a minute, that was a different occasion altogether." This happens when you begin a train of thought which you can't complete. It is sometimes deliberately used for effect in W. E. and is a figure of speech known technically as anacaluthon (loss of grammatical sequence).

These are just some of the more obvious differences between S. E. and W. E. They occur to a greater or lesser extent in all languages. The more one thinks about it, the more remarkable do these variations between our manner of speaking and our manner of writing appear to be. The cause, no doubt, lies in human nature. It is a subject that might interest the sociologist as well as the linguist.

THE WEAK FORMS

BY J. G. BRUTON

Education Officer, The British Council, India

ONE of the chief characteristics of spoken English is its rhythm, for not only is it true that in multi-syllabic English words one syllable is picked out for emphasis (character*is*tic, civili*za*tion, *ne*cessary) but also that in the sentence certain words are emphasised, principally because they carry the main burden of the meaning. In this sentence

Why didn't you come when I asked you to?

the really important words from the point of view of the meaning are: *why*, *come* and *asked*, so that when we speak such a sentence normally we emphasise these words at the expense of the others, like this:

Why didn't you *come* when I *asked* you to?

—— . . —— . . —— . .

(the bar indicates an accented syllable, the dot an unaccented one). Similarly, in:

I've brought back the book that you lent me.

the important words are: *brought, back, book, lent*: therefore the sentence would be said like this:

I've *brought back* the *book* that you *lent* me.

. ——— ——— . ——— . . ——— .

Analysis reveals that it is normal to emphasise certain classes of words. They are—

NOUNS

Spring is the *pre*lude to *Sum*mer.

——— . . ——— . ——— .

ADJECTIVES

Your blue book is on *my desk.*

——— ——— ——— . . ——— ———

ADVERBS

He *fin*ished the *work quick*ly and ef*fic*iently.

. ——— . . ——— ——— . . . ——— . .

VERBS

Verbs, apart from the exceptions which will be noted later, are usually accented.

He *shout*ed as he *ran.*

. ——— . . . ———

INTERROGATIVE WORDS

Why did you *go*?

——— . . ———

What is the *time*?

——— . . ———

It follows that certain other classes of words are not accented in unemphatic utterances. One such big class are the prepositions, in which, when they occur in the body of a sentence and

do not carry any major portion of the meaning, the vowel is usually reduced to the neutral ə sound. For example, in the sentence

I *took* it from *him*.

• —— • • ——

Since "from" is not accented, the vowel is reduced from the full sound to ə; phonetically transcribed, the sentence reads—

ai 'tuk it frəm him

If, however, "from" occurs at the end of a sentence, it is partially emphasised and the full form is normally used—

Where does he *come from*?

—— • • —— ——

Wɛ dəz hi kʌm frm

A good general rule is to use the weak form where the preposition occurs at the beginning or in the middle of the sentence and the strong form where it occurs at the end. Here are some further examples of weak forms—

AT
We got there *at* six o'clock (ət)

FOR
She bought it *for* three rupees (fə)

TO
Ram went *to* the station (tu not tu:)
Where are you going *to*? (tu:)

Two important conjunctions that are normally used in these weak forms are "that" and "than"—

I thought that you weren't coming (δət)
It's dearer than I expected (δən)

A number of frequently used verbs are quite often found in the weak form—

BE

I am sure (aim)

He was busy (wəz)

HAVE

We have finished (wi:v, wi:həv)

He has gone (hi:z, hi: həz)

CAN

She can paint (kən)

DO

Does he believe you? (dəz)

SHALL

I shall wait (ʃəl)

Some nouns where they form parts of compounds are similarly weakened—

MAN

Frenchman, gentleman (mən)

LAND

England, Finland (lənd)

The correct use of these forms is an essential feature of the rhythmic speaking of English; if the words that carry the main burden of the meaning are correctly emphasised, it will be found that the weak forms of the other words appear naturally. It is difficult to teach them consciously and probably the most that a teacher can do is to use them as correctly as possible himself and leave the rest to his pupils' faculty for imitation. Once children have been introduced, for example, to the form "was" and have become reasonably sure in their use of it, they should not be allowed to say

The *book was* on the *table*.

but should be taught

The *book* was on the *table*.

It may be useful from time to time to introduce some rhythm drills—

The *day* was *hot*, so we *went* for a *swim*.

Your *book* is *here*, and your *bag* is *there*.

My *brother* is *tall*, but my *sister* is *short*.

More detailed information about the points covered briefly here will be found in—

D. Jones, *An Outline of English Phonetics*, Heffer.

I. C. Ward, *The Phonetics of English*, Heffer.

P. McCarthy, *The Pronunciation of English,* Heffer.
A. S. Hornby, *English by Radio,* Records—B. B. C.
W. S. Allen, *Living English Speech,* Longmans Green.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING, ALLAHABAD

At the beginning of December, 1956, the first batch of 40 teachers of English in High Schools in Uttar Pradesh entered the newly established Department of English Language Teaching, attached to the Government Central Pedagogical Institute, Allahabad.

This new Department is under the control of the Department of Education, Government of Uttar Pradesh, and has been set up with the help of the Nuffield Foundation. It offers a course of four months' duration to teachers of English in Junior High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools in Uttar Pradesh. Two such courses will be conducted every year. In charge of the Department is Professor C. S. Bhandari, a former British Council Scholar who holds the Diploma in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language of the Institute of Education, University of London. Spoken English and Phonetics will be taught by Mr. J. W. Spencer, a British Council officer on secondment to the U.P. Government.

The subjects covered by the Course are :

(a) General Linguistics
(b) Teaching English in the Junior High School.
(c) English Language and Teaching English in the Higher Secondary School.
(d) Spoken English.
(c) Practical Phonetics.

In addition, students are expected to do practice teaching under supervision in chosen schools in Allahabad.

At the end of each course, all students will sit for an examination, on the results of which diplomas in the Teaching of English will be awarded.

We greatly welcome the creation of this new institution and wish Professor Bhandari and his colleagues all success in their efforts.

TEACHING THROUGH SITUATIONS

By J. G. Bruton

Education Officer, British Council, New Delhi

One of the commonest objections made to the use of Oral Methods in teaching foreign languages is that there are many aspects of any language that cannot be dealt with by demonstrations or by explanation in the language being taught. Objectors point out gleefully that such vocabulary items as abstract nouns and many of the anomalous finite verbs cannot be explained by the methods normally recommended for use in Oral Method teaching.

A mistaken assumption in the argument is that Oral Method teaching completely forbids the use of the student's mother tongue. In actual fact, there are probably no teachers, even among the most fervid practitioners of Oral Methods, who do not at some time make use of their students' native language as a means of promoting understanding, especially when its use provides a quicker and more efficient means of teaching meaning. There is no reason for a teacher not to translate difficult vocabulary items or to explain difficult usages in the pupil's vernacular, provided he does not habitually use translations as a teaching device. The reasonable exercise of imagination will reduce the number of occasions when recourse is had to translation to a minimum.

There are a number of difficulties of English usage which cannot be taught either by pure demonstration or by translation, but which many teachers normally try to explain to the pupils by the latter method. What usually happens as a result is that, faced with two radically differing patterns, the student remembers the more familiar, the one native to him, more readily than he does the unfamiliar one, and proceeds to translate literally, producing a sentence which is English in words only, since the structure is foreign. This is what obviously happens with the many Indian speakers of English who use expressions like "I am living here since six years" or "I have seen him yesterday."

Difficulties of usage of this type are best taught by building up situations based on familiar materials which culminate in the use of a new structure or a new form whose meaning is made apparent by the material used. I have explained in a previous article how this particular technique can be applied to the teaching of the use of the Present Perfect. This situation is built up in this way:

I came here at 9 o'clock.
It is now 11 o'clock and I am still here.
I have been here for 2 hours.

The same technique can be applied to the teaching of the meaning and use of the anomalous finite *may* :

Do you think he will come to-morrow ?
I don't know whether he will come or not.
Perhaps he will, perhaps he won't.
He *may* come.

or to the teaching of *can.* The problem in teaching the uses of this particular verb is best tackled by teaching the negative form first, and then leading on to the affirmative :

(a) There's a boy in the garden.
Between the boy and me there's a wall.
I *can't* see him.
Now I *can*.

(b) Ram is sitting in his place.
My eyes are shut.
I *can't* see him.
Now I *can*.

(c) Ram is speaking.
My fingers are in my ears.
I *can't* hear him.
Now I *can*.

Readers will notice that these examples are all of *can* used to indicate one kind of ability—that conferred by situation.

The same technique will serve in teaching *must* :

(a) My tea is at 5 o'clock.
It is now 10 to 5.
I *must* go home.

(b) Your sister is ill.
She is asking for you.
You *must* come at once.

(c) My father is arriving by train at 8 o'clock.
It is now half-past seven.
I *must* go to the station.

The first introduction of conditional clauses can be made by a slight variation of the same technique:

(a) I have eight annas in my hand.
I am giving four annas to you.
If I give these four annas to you, you will have eight annas.

But I shall not give them to you.
If I gave them to you, I should have nothing.
I did not give them to you.
If I had given them to you, I should have had nothing.

(b) This is an egg in my hand.
If I drop it, it will break.
But I shall not drop it.
If I dropped it, it would break.
I did not drop it, because if I had, it would have broken.

By the exercise of imagination it is easily possible to work out sets of examples of this kind to teach children how to handle a good many of the problems of English structure which cannot be adequately dealt with by translation or by attention to the purely grammatical aspects.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

WILLIAM S. GRAY: *The Teaching of Reading and Writing, UNESCO*

This is the final report of a four-year survey of the methods in use all over the world for the teaching of reading and writing, carried out by UNESCO and various national educational bodies, under the guidance of a universally recognised expert on the problems under consideration.

The report is detailed and exhaustive, covering the problems of teaching both children and adults to read and write. Some of the statistics provided are startling in the light that they throw upon the standard of literacy attained throughout the world; the authors state, among other things, that at least half the population of the world is functionally illiterate.

The most interesting part of the report is that which deals with reading attitudes and functional literacy. The authors have reached the conclusion that a child's progress in developing reading

and writing skills depends not so much on the methods used as upon the mental attitude that he himself adopts. The methods most commonly used for developing reading skills are described in considerable detail, and it would seem that the authors approve most strongly of "global" as opposed to "analytic" methods; the "sentence" method as opposed to the "ABC" method. But, significantly, the report concludes that "there is no evidence to show conclusively which of the methods in current use is the best". A further conclusion is that in all probability a combination of methods will produce the most satisfactory results, but that in the last resort, success or failure will depend on the teacher, who must evolve methods best suited to his own needs and beliefs and also to the needs of his pupils.

This study offers a most welcome summary of practices the world over in the teaching of the fundamental skills of reading and writing and merits the attention of all those who are concerned with fundamental education and literacy programmes. Much of the material is also of obvious value to those whose job it is to teach foreign languages.

QUESTION BOX.

Question : At what stage in an English course should the teaching of Grammar be introduced?

This is a vexed question and one upon which there is a great deal of disagreement. A great many people appear to believe that the use of modern oral methods of teaching necessarily implies rejection of grammar. This is probably due to the fact that the advocates of such methods recommend that formal grammar should not be taught in the early stages, while more conservative advisers believe in the introduction of grammatical principles from the beginning. But it is simply not true to say that oral methods exclude the study of grammar.

The recommendation that the study of grammar should be deferred until students have some knowledge of English is based upon the fact that grammar implies analysis and that analysis can only be performed successfully when material for analysis is available. Grammatical observations are simply observations about the ways in which a language behaves, in effect, when we formulate a grammatical generalisation, we are saying "From our observations of examples of English, we conclude that it behaves in such and

such a way." Surely our teaching should therefore be based upon this fact; we should guide our students to make such generalisations in the light of their own knowledge and experience of English. The longer we delay the introduction of formal grammar, the greater will that knowledge and experience be, the more valid will be the generalisations.

Question : What are the differences in use between "hardly" and "scarcely"?

In most cases there is very little difference between these two words, and one may usually be substituted for the other, as in the following examples :

I *hardly* know him.
I *scarcely* know him.

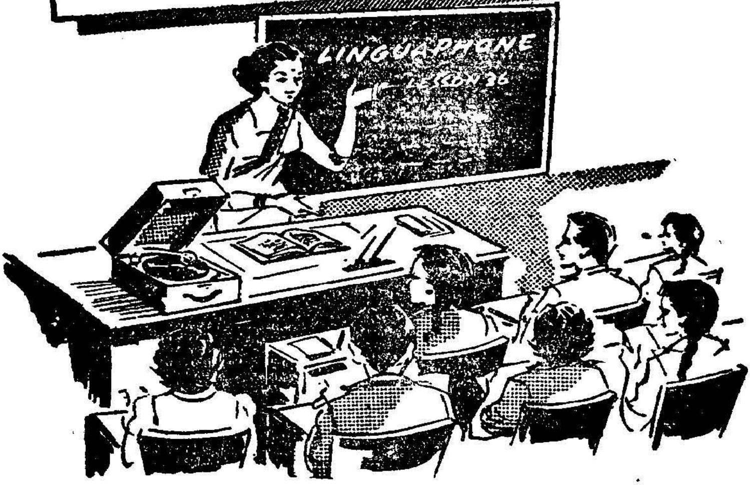
I have *hardly* enough money.
I have *scarcely* enough money.

You will *hardly* have time to do it.
You will *scarcely* have time to do it.

Hardly had we finished, when the bell rang.
Scarcely had we finished, when the bell rang.

They can *hardly* blame us.
They can *scarcely* blame us.

first you listen



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